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ITALIAN OPERA, WINTER GARDEN.

Max Maretzek's company opened on Monday night at Winter Garden, to a crowded, brilliant and fashionable audience. It was pleasant to recognize familiar faces, and to know that the elite of society was once more rallying round the standard of Maretzek. Great alterations have been made in the interior of the house. The Parquette has been carpeted, 150 elegant chairs have been added, the gilding all over the house has been retouched, private boxes have been added round the dress circle, and a hundred new lights have been introduced. The auditorium has indeed been changed in a wonderful manner, and looks now not only clean and cheerful but light and brilliant. It was a just homage to the refined habitudes of the Opera, and it was a pleasant sight to see once more the brilliant and recherche toilet of the ladies.

The house was not only elegant and fashionable, but it was in the best of humors, and greeted the artists in the most cordial manner. Of the performance of this opera by the same artists we spoke in terms of the warmest praise a few weeks since. There is little to be added, excepting that in Ronconi we discover new excellences each time he appears. He enters so thoroughly into the character that there is nothing stereotyped. He acts upon the impulse of the moment, and the result is a veritable piece of nature—of unadulterated humor—of pure emphatic expression, whether it be of joy or sorrow. We do not desire to take our eyes off from him the moment of his entering on the scene, for every gesture has a meaning, every movement has a point which we would not willingly lose. He is, indeed, a consummate artist, whether as an actor or a singer, and he seems to have renewed the vigor of his youth, for his voice is better in every

particular than it was ten years ago. We confess that our enjoyment of this "Crispino," principals, chorus and orchestra, is keen in the extreme. Kellogg is so charming, and warbles with such fluent grace; Testa, Bellini and Antonucci are so thoroughly admirable in all they do, that we doubt if we ever had a more perfect ensemble than this opera presents, and we cannot wonder at the success it meets with wherever it is performed. The individual and collective success of the artists last evening was very great indeed. Several encores occurred, and the singers were frequently called before the curtain to receive the plaudits of the audience.

THEODORE THOMAS'S SECOND SYMPHONY SOIREE.

The second of Theodore Thomas's Symphony Soiree, was one of the finest concerts ever given in this city. It was conceived on a grand scale and was grandly carried out. We took occasion to frequently call public attention to the musical importance of this concert, and to the large pecuniary risk voluntarily taken by Mr. Thomas, to produce the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven in a manner commensurate with its grand proportions, and we were gratified to see our appeal responded to by the large and brilliant audience attending at Steinway Hall, on Saturday evening, although the number was not sufficient to protect Mr. Thomas from loss. The production of this Symphony involves the necessity of gathering together a most powerful chorus, a matter almost impracticable in this great city of a million of people. Mr. Thomas used every possible endeavor to achieve this, and if he only partially succeeded it was because it could not be done.

The programme consisted of but three selections. Part 1—Mozart's Overture to the "Marriage of Figaro," and Schuman's Concerto for Piano, in A minor, Op. 54, performed by Mr. S. B. Mills. Part 2—The Ninth Symphony in D minor, Op. 125, by Beethoven. The overture, which is always fresh and ever welcome, was finely executed; every point was promptly taken up, and all the subjects clearly developed, the whole work gaining importance by the superb body of instruments devoted to its performance.

The Schuman Concerto, which is noble in thought and admirable in treatment, was superbly played by Mr. S. B. Mills. It is in such compositions that the best powers of Mr. Mills are developed. In these his crisp, firm and brilliant touch, his faultless execution and equality of finger, his clear and distinct delivery, and his marked and rounded phrasing, are the needed points of excellence—points in which Mr. Mills has few equals, and can scarcely have a superior. We have rarely heard a performance so equal throughout, and

one against which we could hardly raise an objection. His reading of it was unexceptionable and his execution was equal to the inspiration of the composer. Mr. Mills has added lustre to his already high and well deserved reputation by his masterly performance on Saturday evening. The orchestral accompaniments were rendered with admirable care and precision, and with all the fine coloring necessary to sustain and develop the piano solo. This accompaniment was one of the most gratifying features of the concert.

The Ninth Symphony is a titanic work, magnificent in its conception, and culminates in a massive effect of united voices and instruments, which is overpowering in its grandeur and majesty. There are many who deprecate Beethoven's departure from the symphonic model by the introduction of voices; but, to our mind, the result fully justified the departure, for a combination more powerful in wonderful sonority was never conceived or framed by the mind of man.

The several movements of the symphony were played with infinite care. The allegro was taken in fine tempo, which was maintained firmly to the end, and the solid grandeur of the Maestro was wonderfully effective. The scherzo was also brilliantly executed; the color was fine, and in point of delicacy the performance could hardly be excelled. The adagio was, probably, in all points the most finished performance. There was a smoothness and roundness especially in the cantabile passages worthy of all praise. The whole movement was carried through with grace and profound expression.

The great choral portion of the symphony was, instrumentally, grandly performed, and made a profound sensation, notwithstanding that the chorus was by no means equal to their duties. It is true that Beethoven has taxed the voices far beyond the ordinary registers, and the unusual compass demanded, and the exceeding difficulty of the intervals, form a reasonable excuse for some of the short-comings of the singers. The ultimate point of combined power at the close of the movement lost something of its intended effect, from the fact that the instruments overshadowed the voices. Still, the effect was sufficiently massive and brilliant to arouse the enthusiasm of the audience to the highest pitch of excitement. The applause at the close was vehement and long-continued, and loud, imperative call were made for Mr. Thomas, who, on his appearance, was greeted by waving of handkerchiefs and hats, and a perfect uproar of approbation. Such a reception, proving as it did a high appreciation of his successful efforts on this occasion, must have been truly gratifying to Mr. Thomas. It was honestly earned and well deserved. Mr. Thomas labored hard to produce a performance worthy of the art, and his success was complete, so far as he could control the mate-

rial at his command. He proved himself able to sway and direct a vast musical combination, and has placed himself firmly in the position he has striven for for years. We congratulate him warmly upon the results of his efforts, and we hope that some efforts will be made by subscription or otherwise to reproduce the entire programme at an early date. We must say a word for the solo singers. Mr. M. Duschnitz, though apparently nervous, rendered his solo well, and the other members of the quartette, Mrs. Eugene Cruger, Miss Ella Meyer, and Mr. W. F. Hill, acquitted themselves creditably.

One word about the supernumerary conductors. If Mr. Berge got up the choruses, all praise that is due should be awarded to him. But as supernumerary conductor, he was terribly in the way of a perfect performance of the choral movement of the Symphony. His beat constantly differed from that of Mr. Thomas, rendering a perfect unity between chorus and orchestra rarely possible. In vast orchestras of many hundreds of singers and players, a second conductor is often necessary, but on this occasion it was an addition without a gain.

LAST APPEARANCE OF THE BATEMAN CONCERT COMPANY.

The announcement of the last appearance of Madame Parepa and the other fine artists of the Bateman Concert Company, had the effect of drawing out a vast attendance at the Wednesday evening popular concert at Steinway Hall. Just such a throng should have been present every night that they appeared. It was a brilliant and enthusiastic audience, and certainly the excellence of the performance fully justified the enthusiasm so warmly expressed.

Madame Parepa, the reigning Queen of the Concert-room, was in superb voice, and we all know how superb that voice is in its rich and melodious purity. We have rarely heard her sing so well, and doubt if she ever surpassed her performance of last evening. Her "Qui la voce" was a model for grace, expression and perfection of execution. No one can carry the voice so finely, and no artist that we are acquainted with at present has so thorough and so easy a control of every vocal resource. She was rapturously encored, and responded by singing in the most simple but finished manner Arne's lovely aria, "Where the Bee Sucks." Madame Parepa was successful in all her selections, and never, even in her first engagement, was the enthusiasm of the public more warm and more genuine.

Brignoli not having recovered from the sickness from which he has suffered for several days, was unable to appear; some dissatisfaction was expressed, but the production of Dr. Carnochan's certificate by Mr. Bateman satisfied every one.

Mr. S. B. Mills played Liszt's "Midsummer Night's Dream" in a brilliant, accurate and effective manner, and won a hearty encore, to which he responded by playing his very sweet Morceau de Salon, "Murmuring Fountains."

Signori Fortuna and Ferranti and Carl Rosa came in for a full share of the public admiration and deserved the reception they met with. This concert, with the exception of the Brignoli disappointment, was a complete and brilliant success, and makes us regret that we are to lose these admirable artists for an indefinite period.

ROBERT GOLDBECK'S MATINEE.

Mr. Robert Goldbeck gave his first matinee at Steinway Hall on Wednesday afternoon, 21st inst., before a numerous audience. He was assisted by Miss Nettie Sterling, Mr. George Simpson, and Mr. S. B. Mills, by permission of Mr. H. L. Bateman.

The principal feature of the programme was a new piano concerto, composed by Mr. Goldbeck, and played by him, with the assistance of Mr. S. B. Mills, who represented the orchestral score on a second piano. It is utterly impossible to give a definite judgment upon a single hearing of so ambitious a work, more especially as the orchestral score, transferred to the piano, loses all its character and importance, and yields scarcely an atom of coloring to the piano solo. Still, so far as our impressions are concerned, the concerto seemed to be well made, the themes of the movements sufficiently broad and marked to impart a tone, and to gain importance by careful working, and its treatment, in connection with the orchestra, proves that he has studied the power and effect of such a composition very carefully. We hope at some future time to hear it with the orchestra, when the composer's intention will be thoroughly interpreted, and its merits revealed.

Miss Nettie Sterling has made great improvement since we last heard her. She is more matured, both in voice and style. Many of the defects then discernible have been remedied, and Miss Sterling has made quite a stride toward an assured artistic position. Her voice is very beautiful in quality and very rich in sonority, and the blending tones in the registers are firmer and smoother. Her Italian aria was given in excellent style, although she has yet to learn more and to feel more, before she can make such compositions impressive. She rendered Goldbeck's fine song, "Invocation," in a chaste and impressive manner, giving it so intelligent a reading that she won a very cordial encore, to which she responded by singing Goldbeck's Serenade Slumber Song, which is a deliciously dreamy composition, in a sweet and unaffected manner. It would have been more effective, however, if she had in-

creased the tempo a little at the agitato phrase; as it was, the figure in the accompaniment was so retarded that the intended point was lost. Still, Miss Sterling acquitted herself admirably, and made a strong favorable impression upon all present.

Mr. George Simpson sang a selection from Goldbeck's "Love Song"—"O doubt me not" chastely and with much warmth. He has a sweet and sympathetic voice and uses it very skillfully. He also sang Beethoven's "Adelaide" chastely and expressively. A little more abandon would have made it more impressive.

Mr. Goldbeck's piano solos were played more brilliantly and effectively than usual. His manner in public has much improved. He has restrained his too great impetuosity, and now gives out his subjects in a clear and defined manner. Still, his playing, to great extent, lacks individuality, without which no player can strongly impress a public. His reading of Chopin's "Mazurka" was poetical and just, and only failed of being admirable from the want of a tenderness of touch.

OPERA COMIQUE—THEATRE FRANCAISE.

Herold's almost grand opera, "Zampa," in its second representation at the Theatre Francaise, evidenced marked improvement in almost every particular. "Zampa" has always been regarded as presenting many difficulties in the principal roles, the situations depending more upon great ensemble excellence requiring high dramatic power in the artists than upon facile and brilliant vocal achievement. Herold obviously planned the work upon Da Ponte's "Don Giovanni," and for all situations which depend upon supernatural agency for sensational and intensely dramatic effect, he follows Da Ponte's ideas quite closely, simply changing the form of the statue, and making Leporello a corsair's mate instead of a valet. Why "Zampa" should have been written for the opera comique instead of a Parisian Grand Opera House puzzles those who do not know or recollect that Roger shone resplendant there, and other competent artists available for the roles of Alphonse, Camille, Capuzzi and Dandolo, that the chorus and orchestra could compare favorably with those of L'Academie, while the *mise en scene*, and every accessory necessary needful to produce such a spectacle-opera were ready for use in lavish profusion. In fact, the great success attained with "Zampa" shaped and controlled to a great extent the managerial policy of the Opera Comique, and so firm and persistent has been the adherence to like melodramatic opera productions, that it elicited from Parisian critics, while commenting upon the latest work in that style, "Jose Maria," that "L'Opera Comique had brigand upon the brain." Roger was lured from his